

English  
Language  
Teaching

Ladybird Graded Readers

# The Secret Garden



Grade 4













To read fluently is one of the basic aims of anyone learning English as a foreign language. **And it's never too early to start.** Ladybird Graded Readers are interesting but simple stories designed to encourage children between the ages of 6 and 12 to read with pleasure.

Reading is an excellent way of reinforcing language already acquired, as well as broadening a child's vocabulary. Ladybird Graded Readers use a limited number of grammatical structures and a carefully controlled vocabulary, but where the story demands it, a small number of words outside the basic vocabulary are introduced. In ***The Secret Garden*** the following words are outside the basic vocabulary for this grade:

**branch, bury, cholera, fresh, green points, hunchback, India, lamb, moor, mouse, nest, pipe, rabbit, robin, shoulder, spade, squirrel, step, wheelchair, warm**

*Further details of the structures and vocabulary used at each grade can be found in the Ladybird Graded Readers leaflet.*

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# The Secret Garden

by Frances Hodgson Burnett



retold by Sue Ullstein  
illustrated by Joy Shufflebotham

Ladybird Books





## The Secret Garden

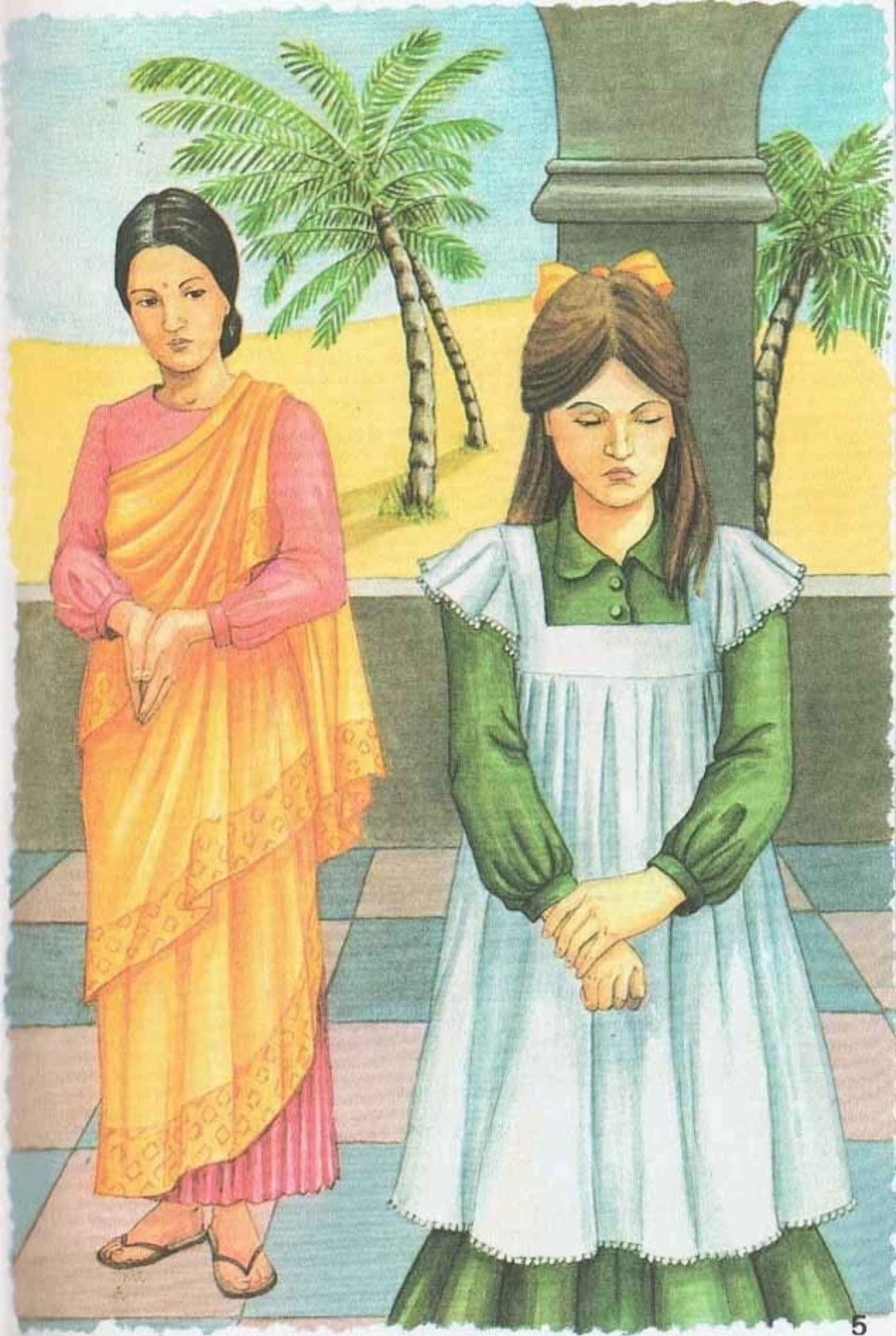
Our story begins nearly a hundred years ago. A little girl called Mary Lennox lives in India with her mother and father. They are English, but they live in India because Mary's father works there.

Mary is not a nice child. She is always cross. She is very thin and she is often ill. She has no friends and no brothers or sisters. She spends all her time with her Indian servant. She does not see her mother and father very often. Her father works very hard and her mother is not interested in children. She never really wanted a child. She likes parties not children.

When Mary is nine years old her life suddenly changes. One morning she wakes up as usual, but her servant does not bring her breakfast. No one comes to her room.

"What has happened?" Mary asks herself.







Soon she goes to sleep again. She sleeps for a long time. Suddenly the door of her room opens and two men come in.

“Who are you?” Mary asks crossly.

“Where’s my servant? Why did no one bring my breakfast?”

“Poor child,” one of the men says.

“There’s no one in the house. Everyone is dead. Didn’t you know about the cholera?”

“What’s cholera?” Mary asks.

“It’s a terrible illness,” the men tell her.

And so Mary learns that her mother and father have died of cholera. She has only one relation in the world – her mother’s brother, Mr Archibald Craven. He lives in a big house called Misselthwaite Manor. It is in Yorkshire in the north of England. Mary has to go to England to live with her uncle. She has never been to England before.

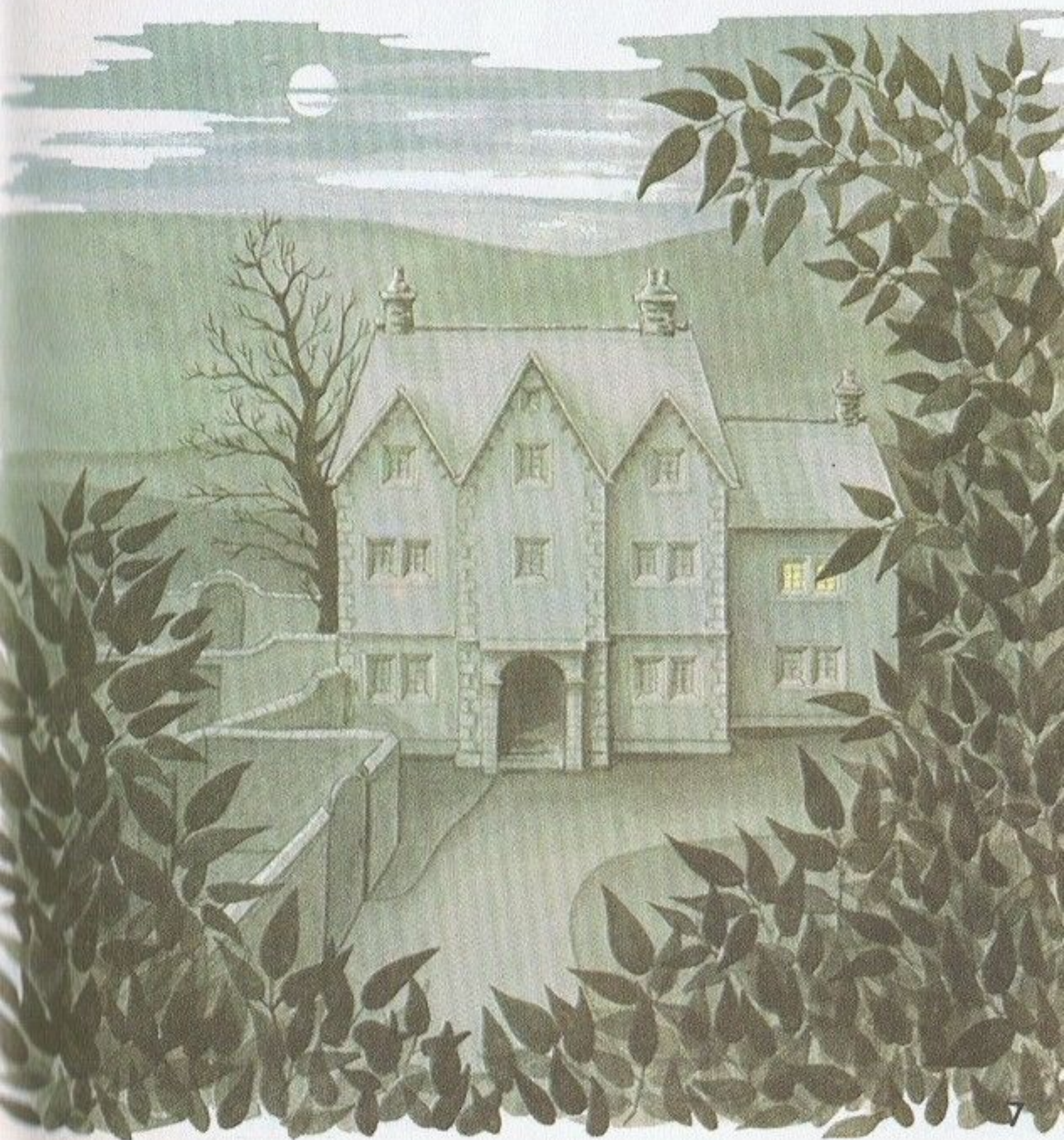
One of Mr Craven’s servants meets Mary in London. Her name is Mrs Medlock. She and Mary go north to Yorkshire by train.

Mrs Medlock tells Mary about her uncle. “He’s a strange, sad man. His wife died ten years ago. He’s been very unhappy since then. He loved her a lot. You won’t see Mr Craven very much. He’s often away from

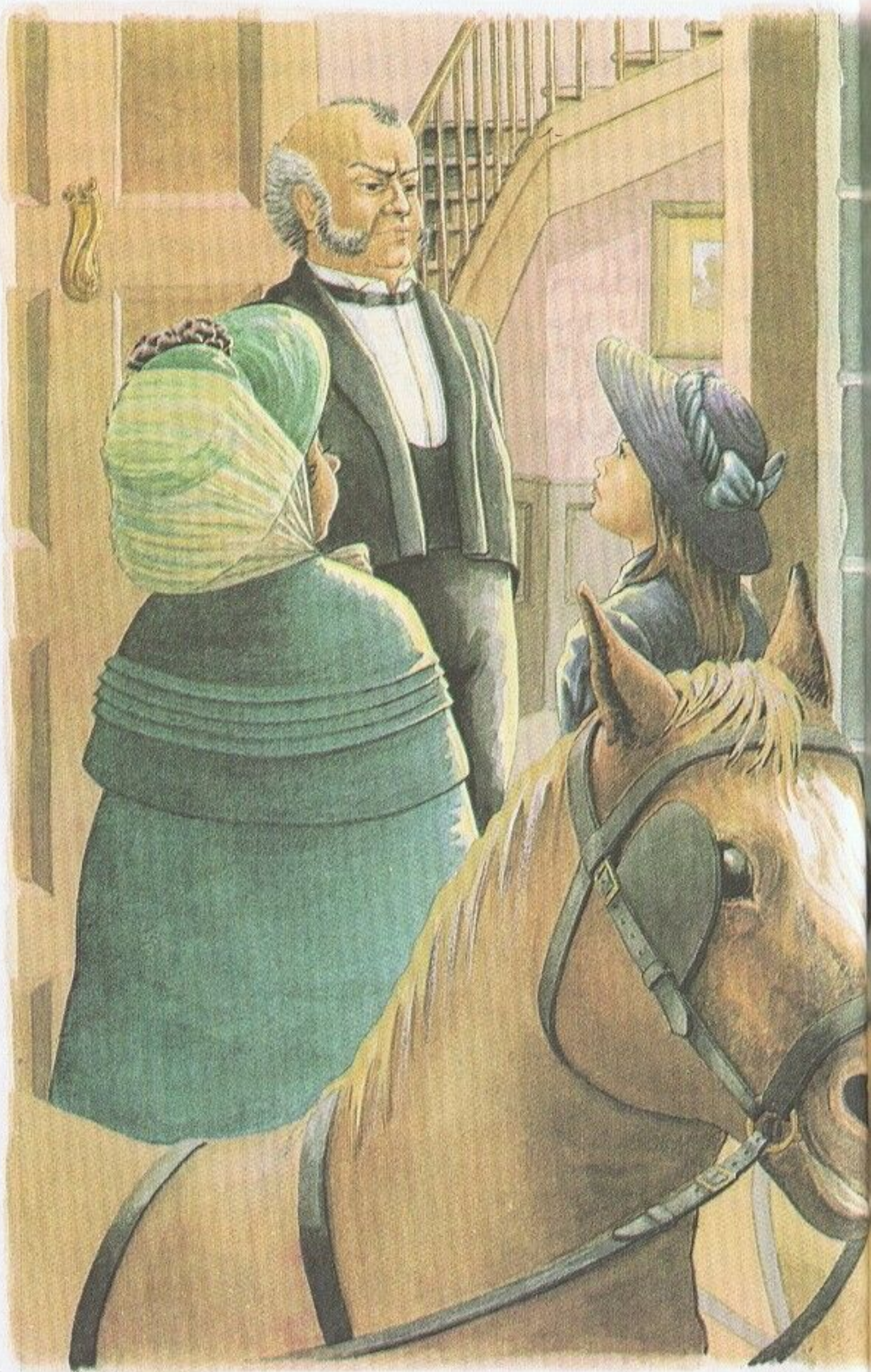


Misselthwaite Manor. The house is one of the biggest in Yorkshire. There are a hundred rooms, but we don't use many of them. It's near the moor."

Mary does not talk to Mrs Medlock. She is frightened and unhappy and cross. "What's a moor?" she asks herself. But she does not ask Mrs Medlock. She does not like her.







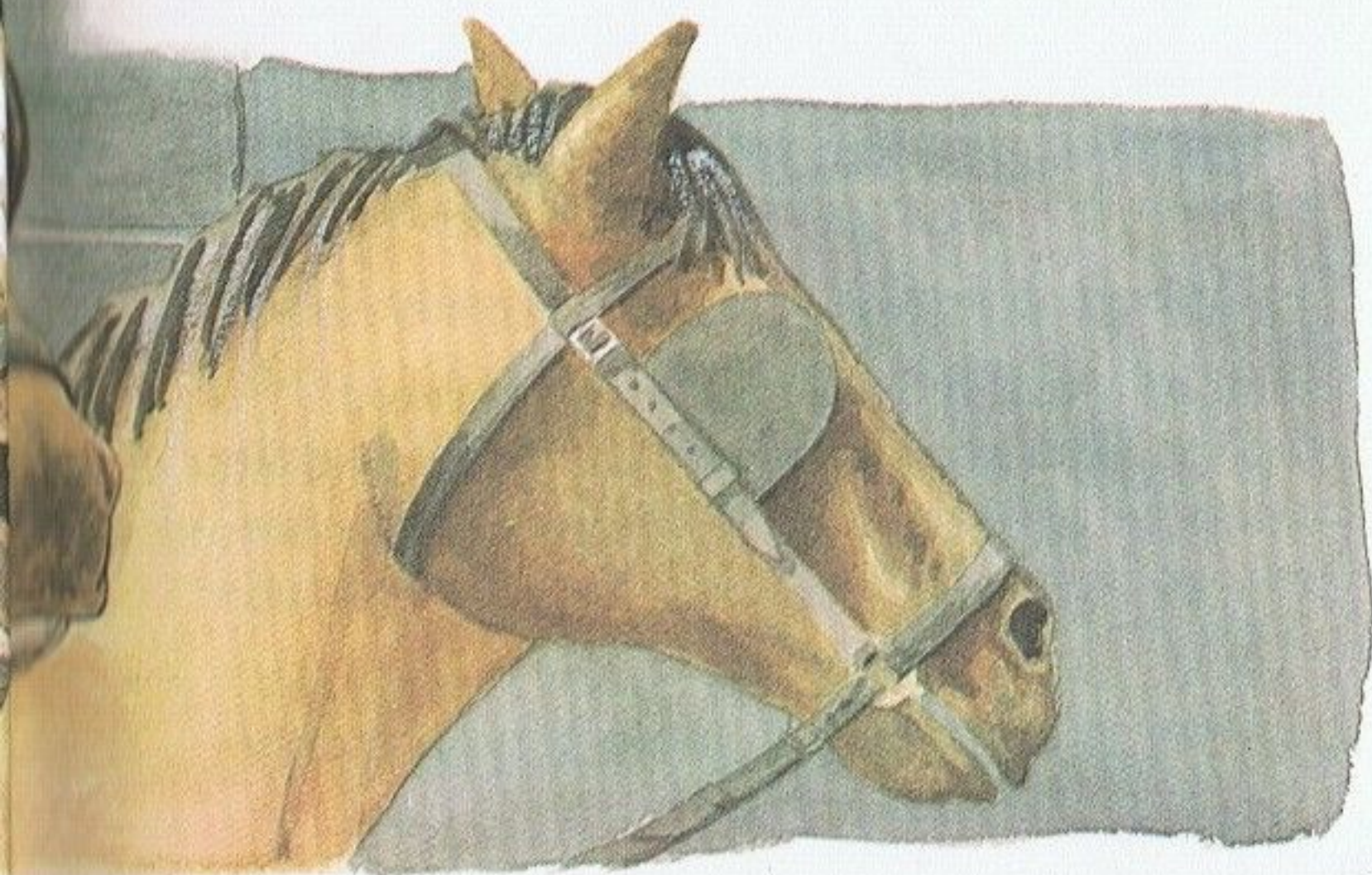


It is dark and cold when they arrive at Misselthwaite Manor. Mary has never been so cold in her life. An old man opens the door. "Take Mary Lennox to her room," he tells Mrs Medlock. "Mr Craven is going to London tomorrow. He doesn't want to see the child."

Upstairs, Mrs Medlock says, "These two rooms are yours. You mustn't go into the other rooms in the house. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Mary says quietly.

Before she goes to sleep, Mary says to herself, "I hate this place."







The next morning she wakes up when a servant comes into her room.

“Who are you?” she asks crossly.

“I’m Martha Sowerby,” the servant replies. She starts to light the fire. “Did you sleep well, Mary? It’s a beautiful day. Are you going to get up now? Your breakfast’s ready.”

Mary is surprised. In India servants only





spoke to her when she spoke to them. She has never met a servant like Martha.

"I don't want any breakfast," Mary says. "I'm not hungry. I'm never hungry."

"Never hungry?" Martha cries. "My nine brothers and sisters are always hungry. There's never enough food for them."

"Why not?" Mary asks.



“Because my father doesn’t earn much money,” Martha says. “But we’re a happy family. The fresh air of the moor keeps us well. My brother Dickon is always out on the moor. He knows all the animals and birds there. He’s their friend.”

“What’s a moor?” Mary asks.

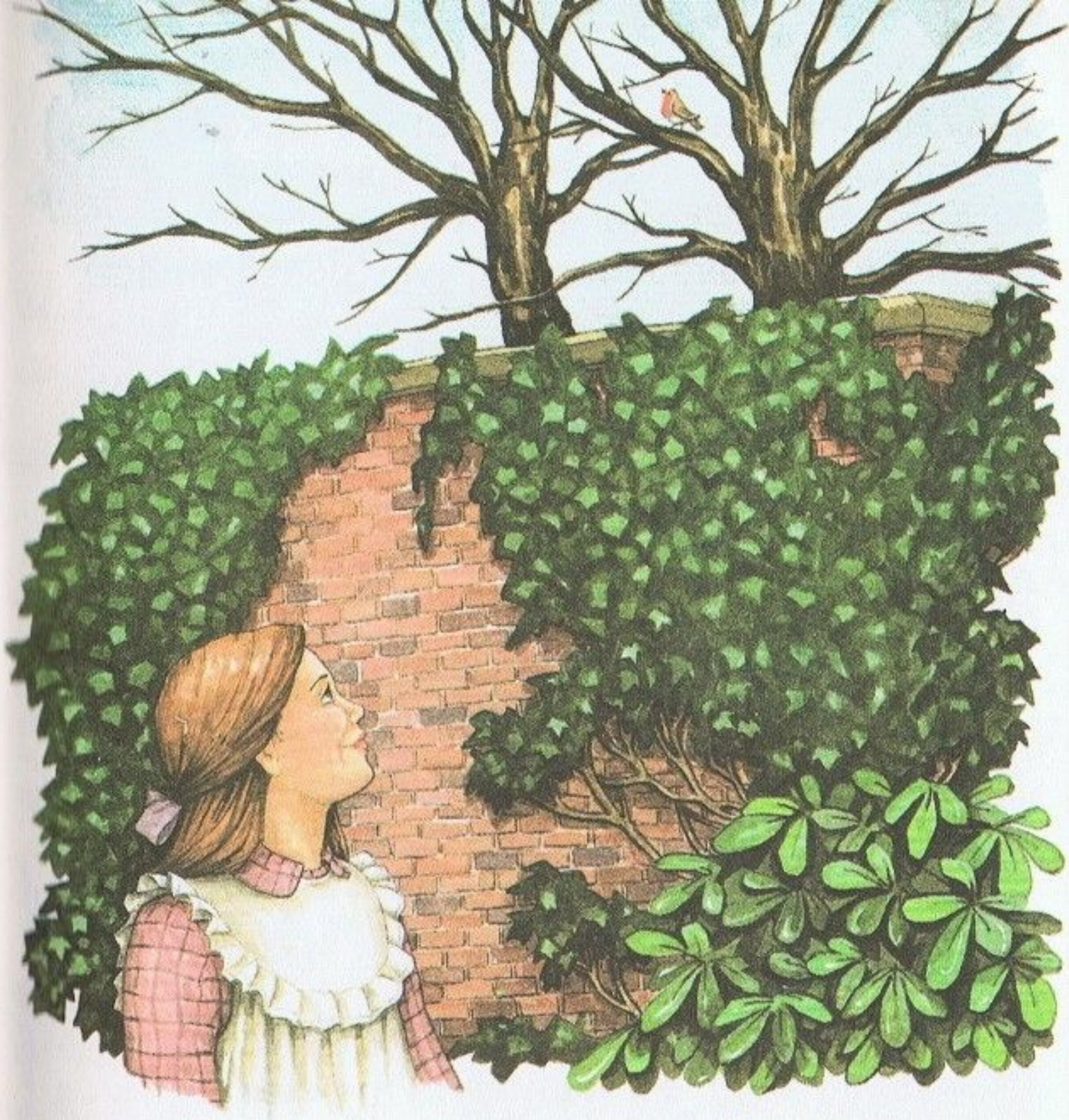
“Look out of the window,” Martha says. “It’s lots and lots of high land. There are no trees – only grass. In the spring and summer there are lots of beautiful flowers. I love the moor.”

“Well, I don’t like it,” Mary says.

“You’ll like it when you know it,” Martha says. “Now eat your breakfast and go out into the gardens.” Martha stops and then she says, “You can’t go into one of the gardens, Mary. It was Mrs Craven’s garden. She loved it. When she died ten years ago, Mr Craven locked the door and buried the key. Mr Craven hates that garden now.”

So Mary goes outside. The gardens are very big. Many have high walls round them. Mary goes from garden to garden. All the





doors open easily. Then she sees a little red and brown bird high up in a tree in the next garden. He starts to sing. His song makes Mary smile. She has not smiled since she left India. She looks for the door into the little bird's garden, but she cannot find it.



Mary starts to think about the locked garden again. "Where is it?" she asks herself. "I'd like to see it very much. If Mr Craven loved his wife, why does he hate her garden?"

Soon Mary sees an old man. He is digging. He does not look friendly.

"Can I go into that garden?" she asks him.

"Why?" he asks crossly.

"Because I want to follow the little red and brown bird," Mary answers.

"You mean the robin," the old man says. Then he smiles and his face changes. He calls, "Robin, robin," very quietly. And at once the little bird flies down and stands near the old man's feet.

"This is my best friend," the old man says. "When he's with me, I'm never lonely."

"I'm often lonely," Mary says.

"Are you the girl from India?" the man asks.

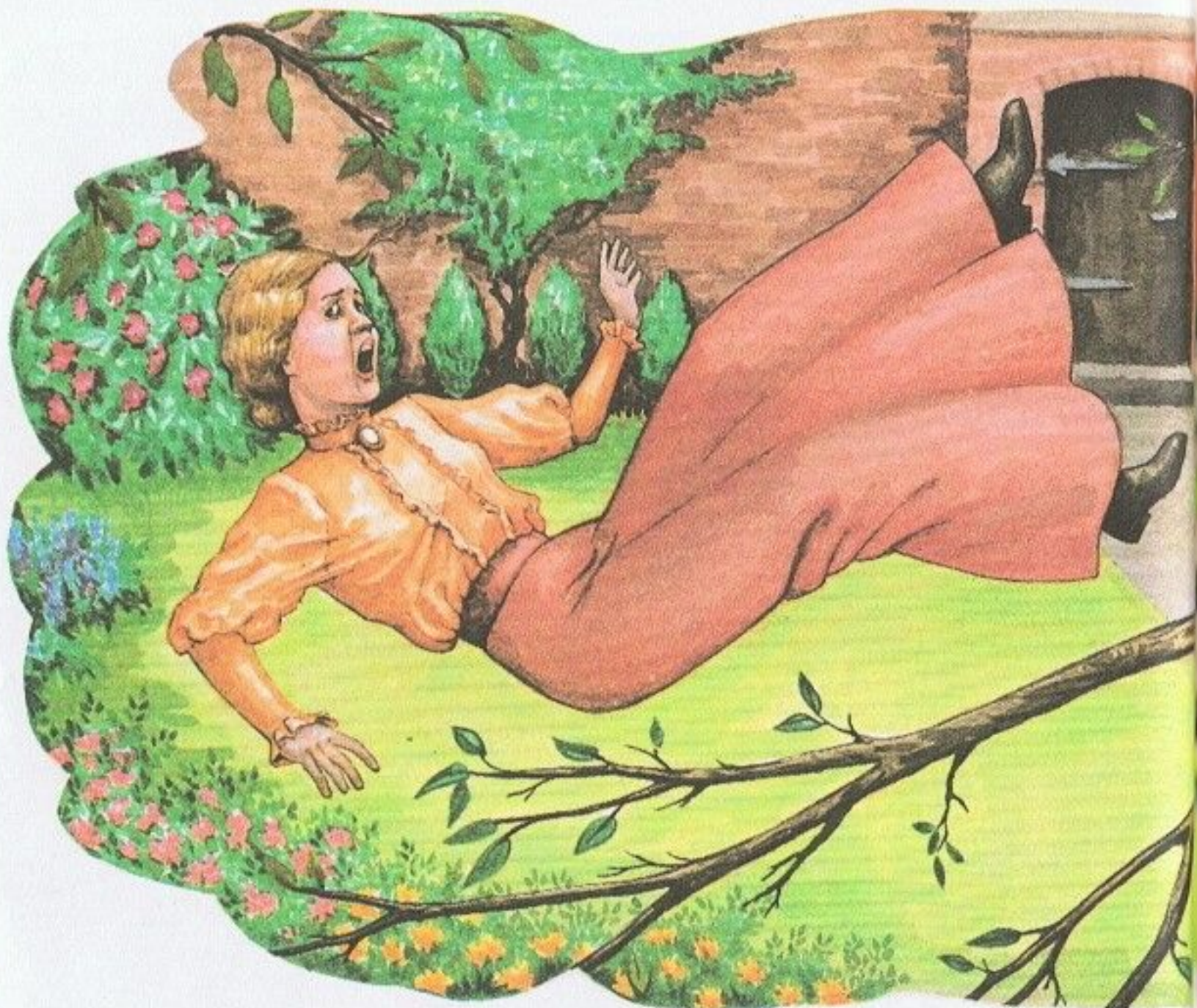
"Yes, I am," Mary replies. "My name's Mary Lennox. What's your name?"

"I'm Ben Weatherstaff," the old man answers. "I'm one of the gardeners here."









Suddenly the robin starts to sing again.  
"He wants to be your friend," Ben says.

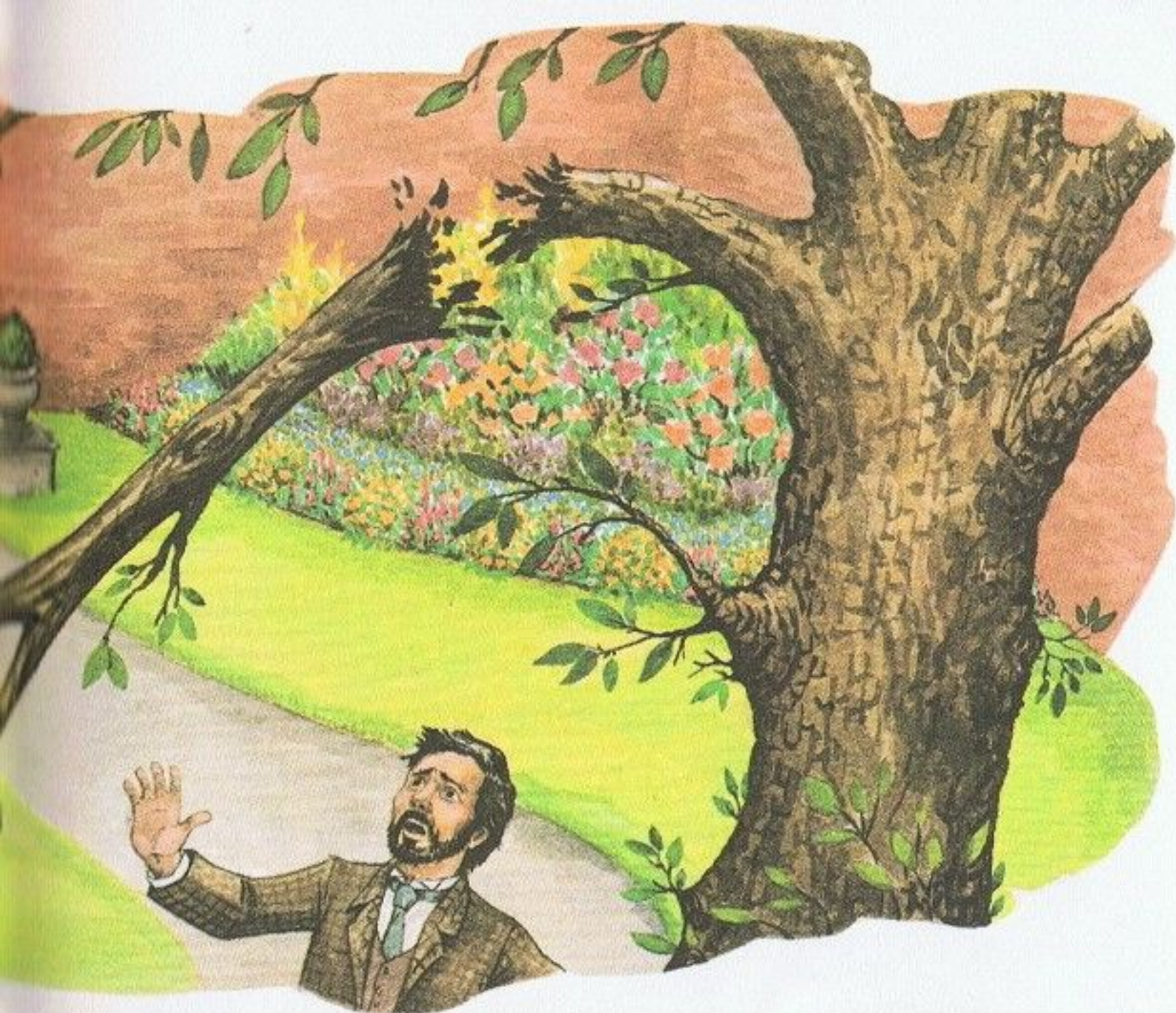
"My friend?" Mary asks. Then she speaks softly to the robin. "Will you be my first friend?" she asks. Her voice has changed.

Soon the robin flies back to the garden with no door.

"Where's the door to that garden?" Mary asks.

"There isn't a door and you can't go in," Ben says crossly. And he turns and walks away.





That evening Mary asks Martha about the locked garden. "Why does Mr Craven hate that garden?"

"Because he and his wife loved it very much. They did all the work there. But one day Mrs Craven sat on the branch of a tree and it broke. She fell and hurt herself badly. She died soon after. Now do you understand?"

"Yes, I do," Mary answers. "Poor Mr Craven." For the first time in her life, Mary feels sorry for someone.



Outside on the moor the wind is making a sad sound. Suddenly Mary hears a different sound.

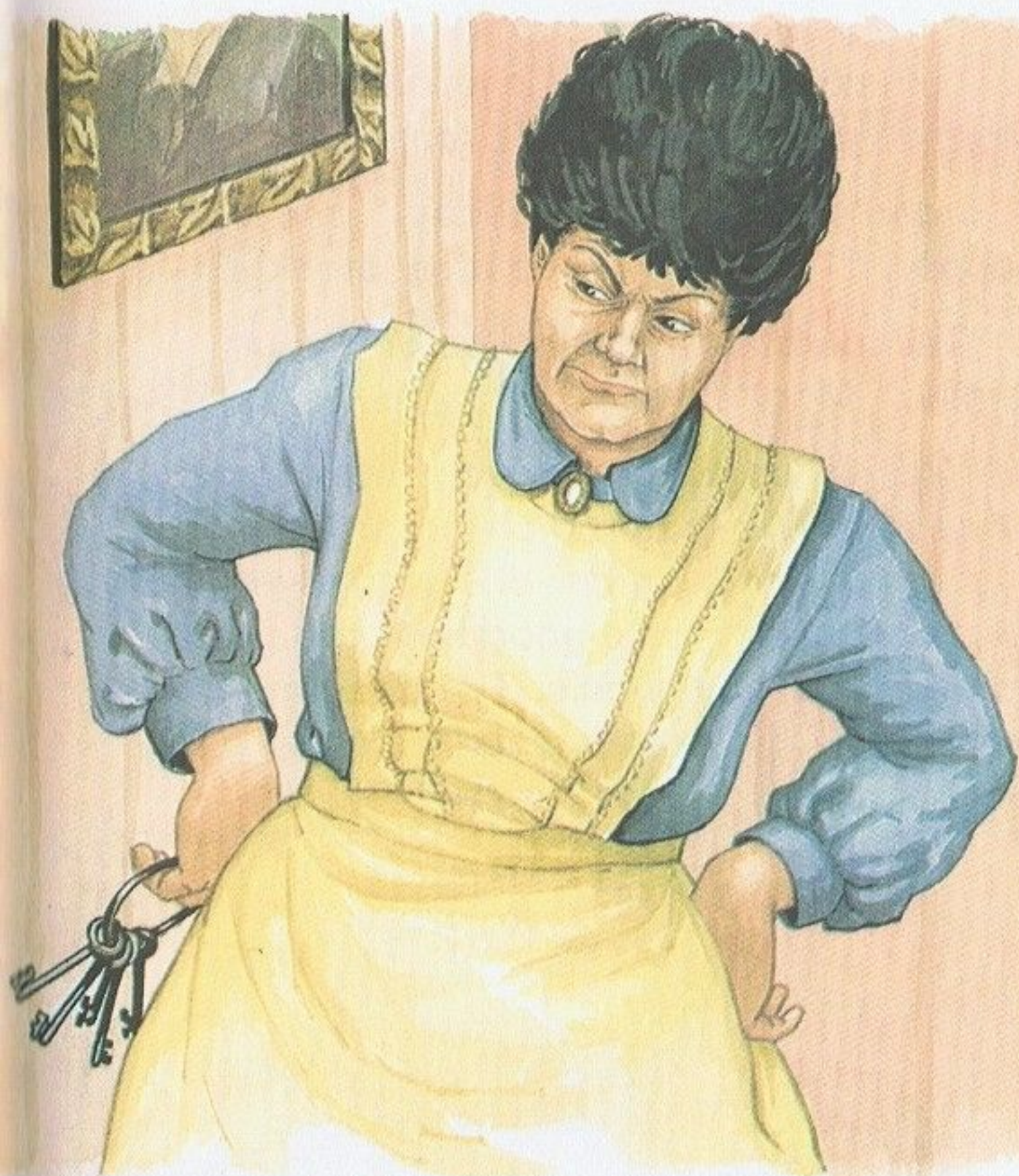
"I can hear a child, Martha," she says.  
"A child is crying."

Martha looks worried. "No, no," she says quickly. "It's only the wind on the moor."

The next day it is raining. Mary cannot go outside into the gardens. She decides to walk round the house. She wants to see some of the hundred rooms. Again she hears a child crying. She stops at a door. "There *is* a child crying," she says to herself. "I know it!"







Suddenly Mrs Medlock is standing behind her.

“What are you doing here, Mary Lennox?” she shouts. “What did I tell you? You must stay in your rooms. Now go back at once.”

Mary is angry but she cannot do anything. She goes back to her room.



The next day the sun is shining again. Martha comes into Mary's room very early.

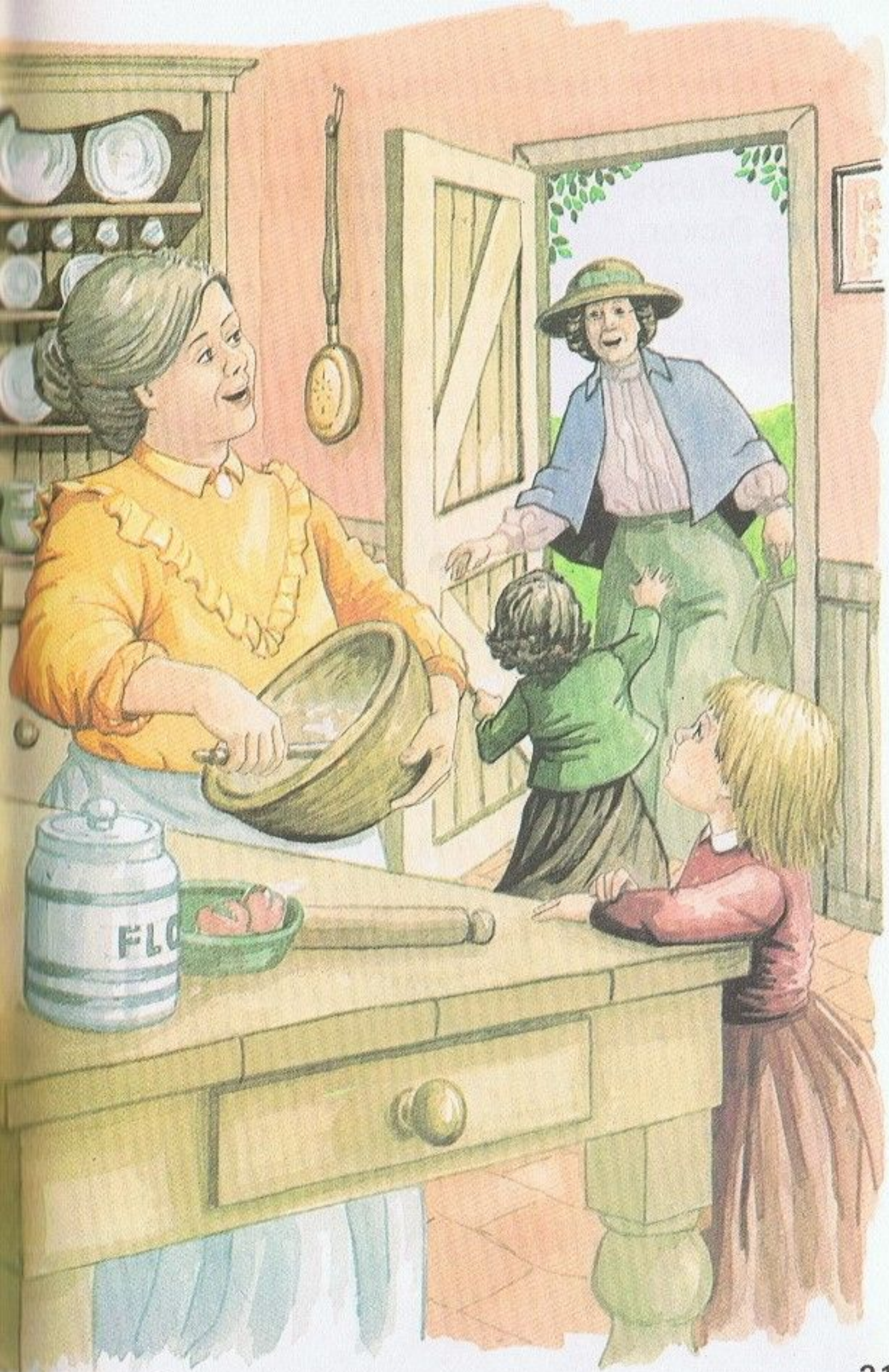
"I don't have to work today," she says happily. "I'm going home after breakfast."

"Tell me about your house and your family," Mary says.

"Well, it isn't a big house," Martha says. "And it's always full of children. My mother is a good, kind woman. She works very hard for us all. Dickon is a good boy, too. He's very kind to his animals. The last time I went home, he had two squirrels and a big blackbird."









"I'd like to meet Dickon," Mary says.

"Perhaps one day you will meet him," Martha says. "You'll like him. Everyone likes Dickon."

"No one likes me," Mary says sadly.

"But do you like yourself?" Martha asks her.

"I don't know. I've never thought about that," Mary says. She is surprised.

When Martha has gone, Mary goes out into the gardens. She is lonely. But she starts to run in the wind and soon she feels better.

Ben is digging in one of the gardens.

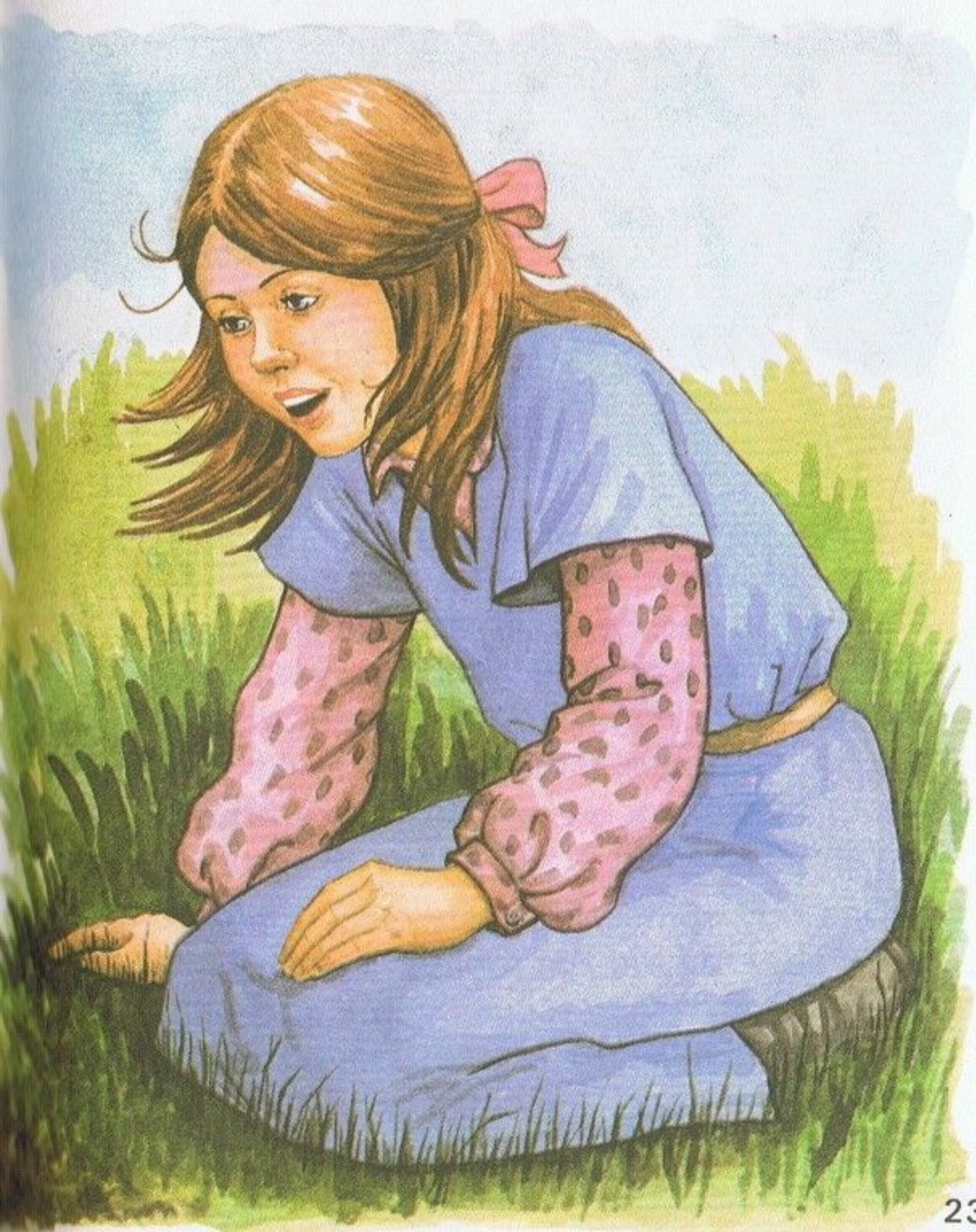
"Spring's coming," he tells her. "Have you seen the little green points in the ground? Soon the spring flowers will be here."

The robin flies down from his tree. He stands near Mary. He picks up a worm. Suddenly Mary sees an old key on the ground.





“Is this the key to the secret garden?” she asks herself. “I’ll keep it safely. Then, if I find the door, I can try it.” And she puts the key into her pocket.







Every day at Misselthwaite Manor is the same for Mary. And every day she grows stronger in the fresh air and the sunshine. She plays in the gardens. She runs to keep warm. She talks to Ben Weatherstaff and the robin. And most of all, she looks for the door into the secret garden. She carries the key in her pocket always.

One day something wonderful happens. Mary is watching the robin in his tree. Suddenly the wind moves some of the plants on the wall and there, under the leaves, is a door!

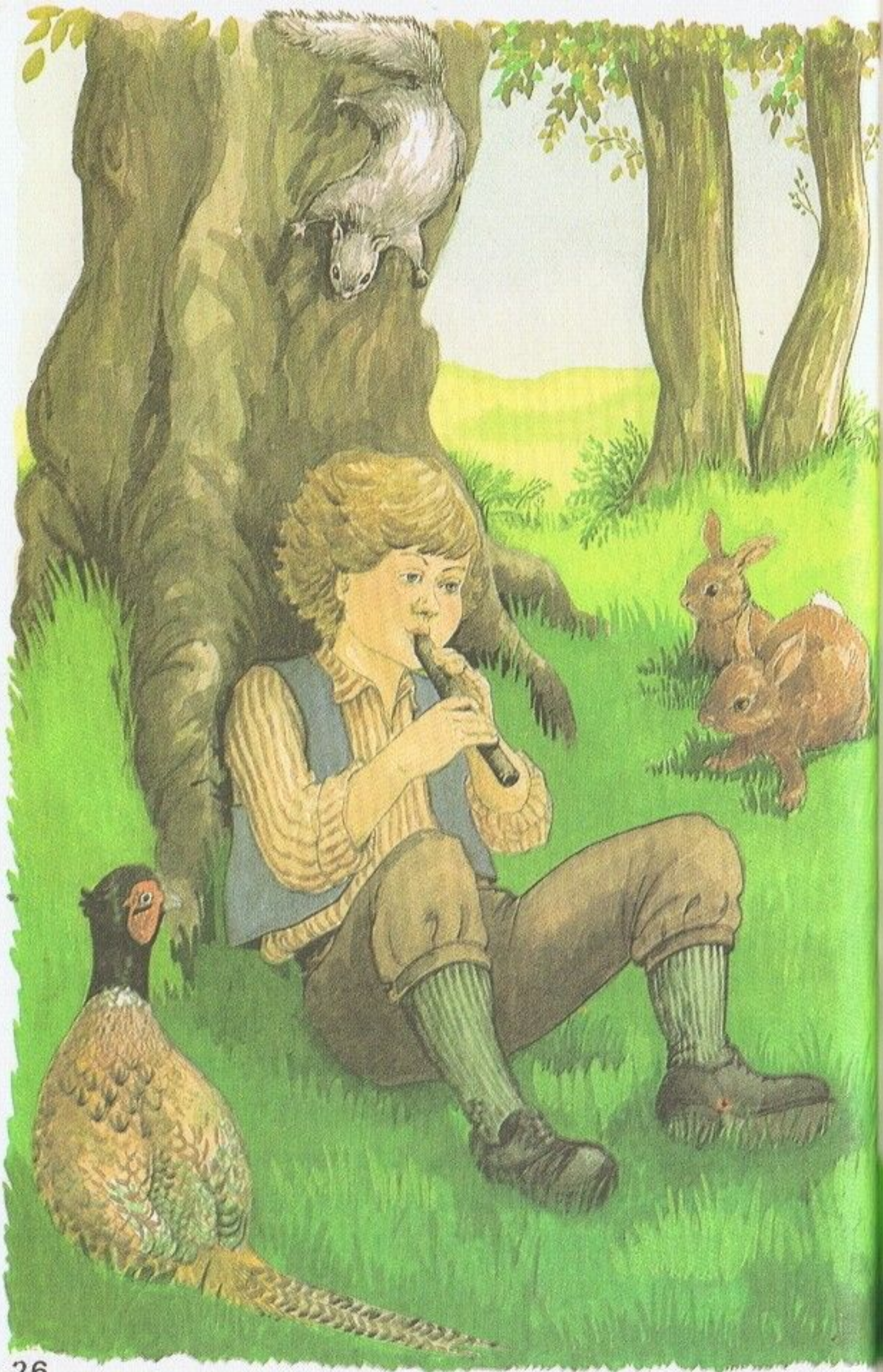




Quickly Mary takes the key out of her pocket. She puts it into the lock. It fits! She tries to turn it. It is difficult, but – yes – it turns! She opens the door and a moment later Mary is standing *inside* the secret garden!

“It’s so quiet!” Mary says to herself. “No one has been here for ten years! But I don’t feel lonely here. It’s a beautiful place!”







Mary sees some little green points on the ground. "There's too much grass round these spring flowers," she says, and she starts to pull up the grass. She works hard in the garden all day. In the evening she goes back to the house and for the first time in her life she is really hungry. At supper she eats everything on her plate!

Mary wants to tell Martha about the secret garden, but she is afraid. If she tells Martha, Martha will tell Mrs Medlock.

So Mary just says, "Martha, I'd like a little garden. I'd like to grow plants and flowers."

"That's a good idea," Martha says. "Shall we write to Dickon? He'll bring you a spade and some seeds."

"Yes, please," Mary says.

A week later, Mary goes out into the garden one morning. She sees a boy under a tree. He is playing a pipe. Two rabbits, a big bird, a little mouse and a squirrel are listening to him.





"Hello. I'm Dickon," he says. "I've brought your spade and the seeds." He smiles at Mary. "Will you show me your garden?" he asks.

For a moment Mary is worried. "Can you keep a secret?" she asks him.

"Yes, I can," he replies. "I promise."

"Do you know about Mrs Craven's garden? Well, I'm making it live again."

She takes Dickon into the garden. "It's beautiful," he says. "But there's a lot of work to do. Shall I help you?"

"Yes, please," Mary says. "You're a kind boy, Dickon, and I like you."

"And I like you, too," Dickon says.

Dickon and Mary work in the garden all day. In the evening Mary goes into the house.

"Quickly, Mary," Martha says.

"Mr Craven wants to see you. He's going away tomorrow."

Mary looks carefully at Mr Craven. He has a kind face but he looks very sad. He is a good-looking man.

"Are you happy here, Mary?" he asks. "Would you like anything?"

"Yes, please, Mr Craven," Mary answers. "I'd like my own little garden."







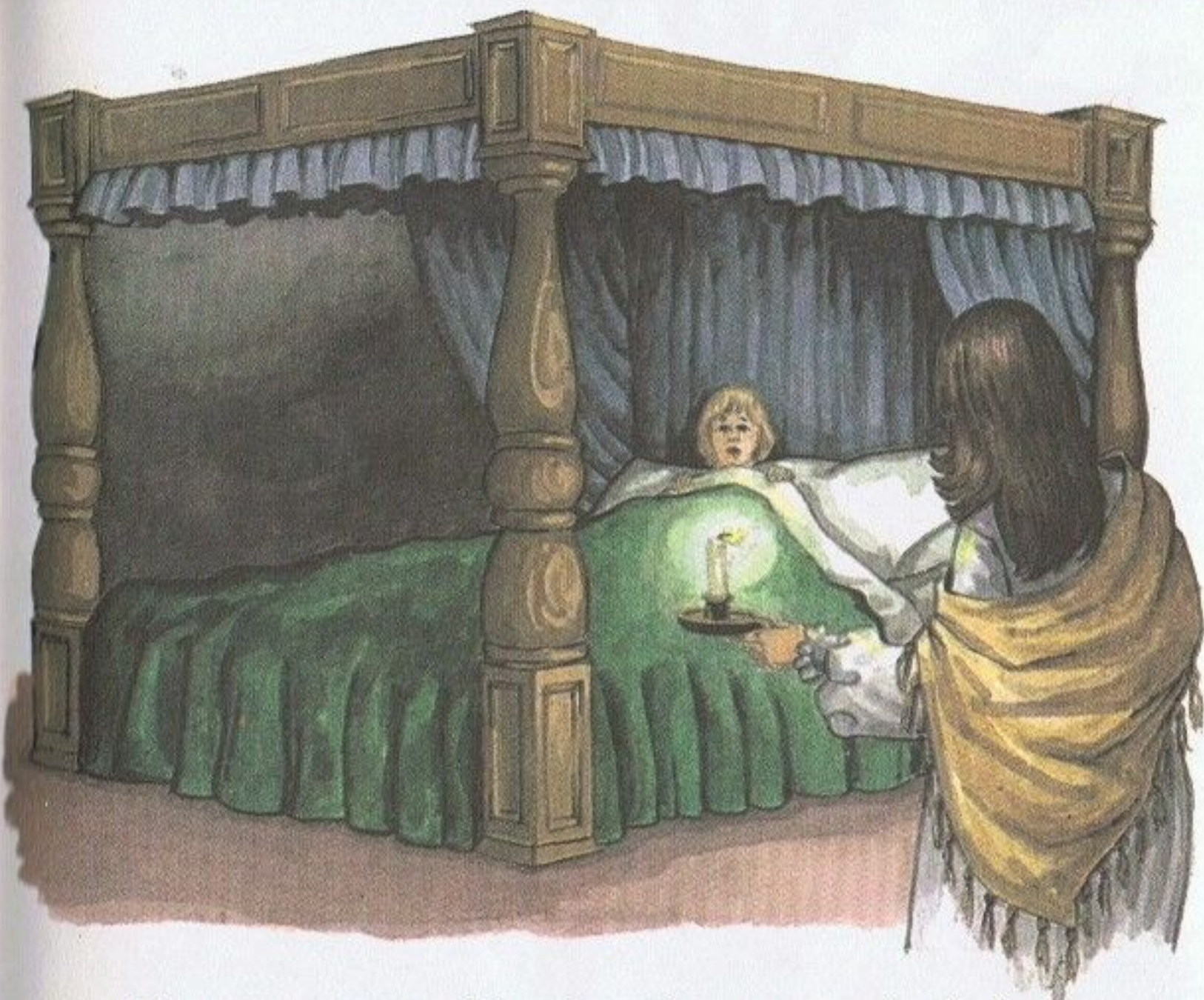
“A garden?” Mr Craven is surprised.  
“Yes, of course – a garden – yes – you can have a garden. Take any piece of garden which the gardeners don’t use.”

Mary is very happy. She can have her secret garden!

That night the wind wakes Mary up. It is making a strange sound. Mary sits up in bed. “I can hear that child again,” she says.







She gets out of bed and goes to look for the child. She sees a light under a door. She opens the door. Inside a boy is lying on a big bed. He is crying loudly. He sounds cross and sad. He stops when he sees Mary. He is frightened.

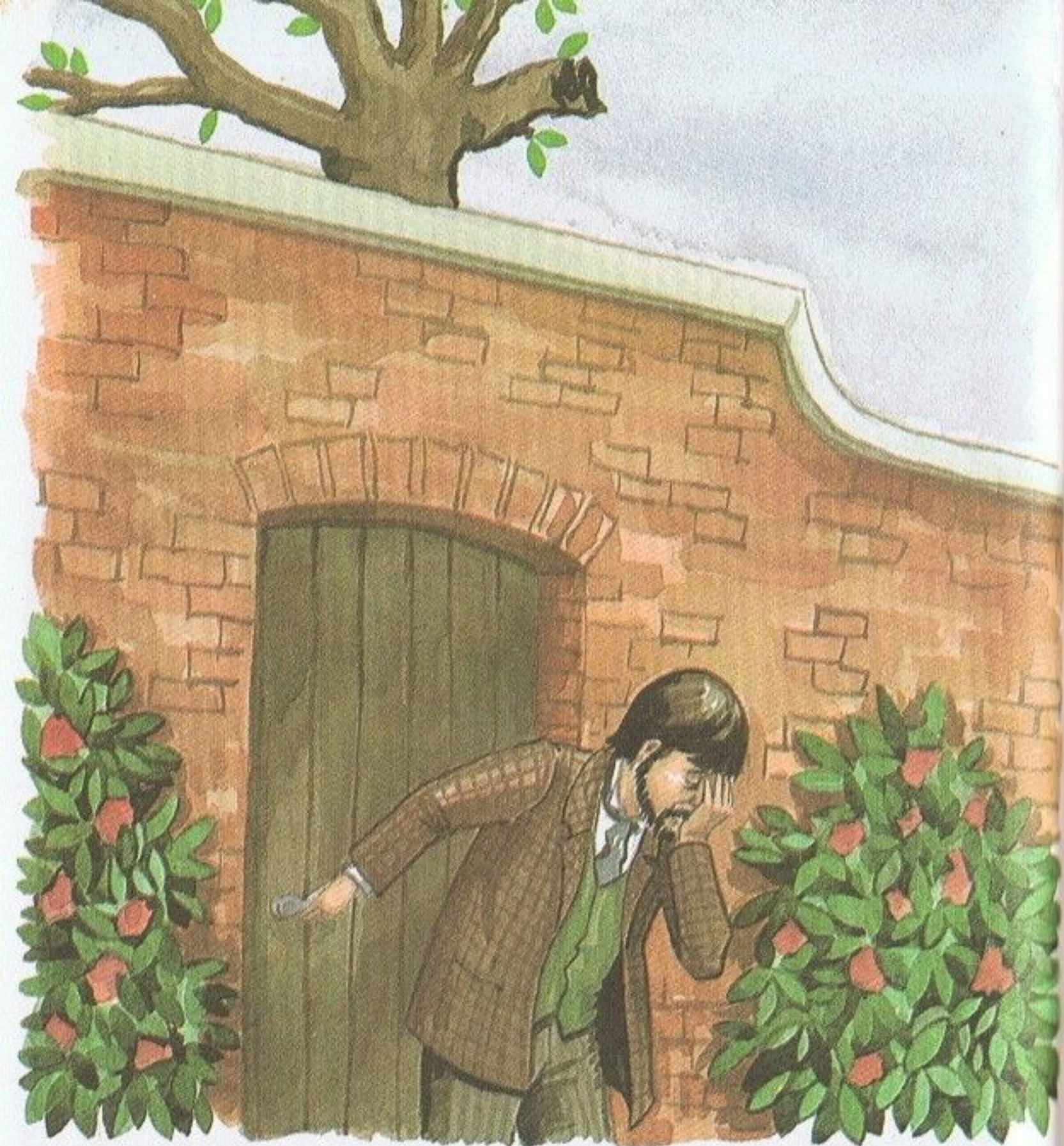
"Are you real?" he asks.

"Yes, I am," Mary answers. She is frightened, too. "Who are you?"

"I'm Colin Craven," the boy replies. "Who are you?"

"I'm Mary Lennox. I live here. I didn't know about you. Did you know about me?"





"No, I didn't," Colin answers. "They didn't tell me because I'm ill. I don't want people to see me. I'm going to be a hunchback and I'm going to die. And my father hates me because my mother died when I was born."

"Shall I go away then?" Mary asks.



"No," Colin says. "Stay and talk to me. Where do you come from?"

"I was born in India," Mary tells him. "I came to live here after my mother and father died of cholera. Your father is my mother's brother."

"So we're cousins," Colin says. "That's good. How old are you, Mary?"

"I'm ten – the same as you are," Mary says.

"How do you know?" Colin asks.

"Because your father locked the garden ten years ago when your mother died," Mary says.

"What garden?" Colin asks.

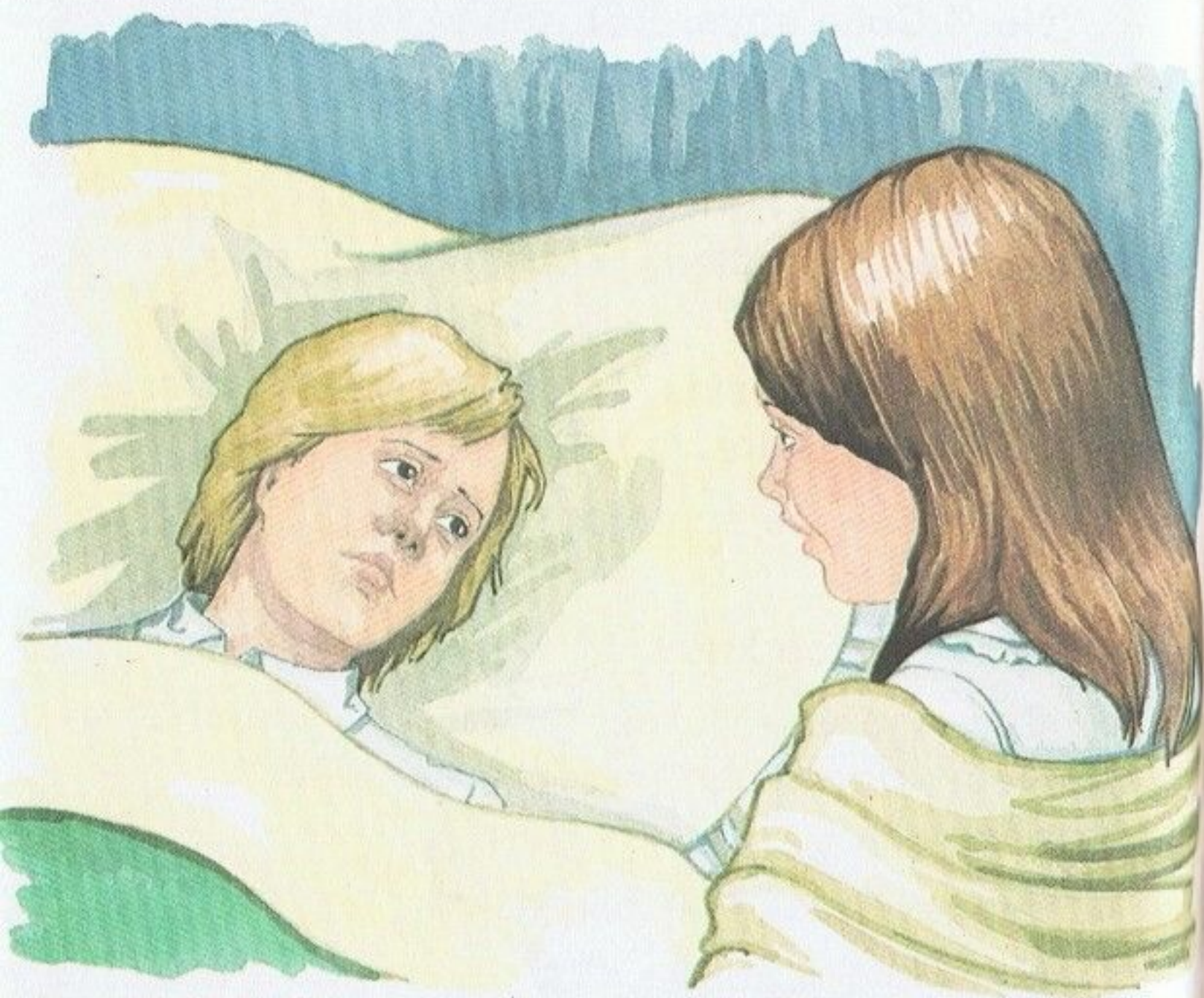
"Oh – just a garden," Mary says. "Your mother used to love it. When she died, your father locked the door and buried the key."

But Colin wants to know more.

"Remember, no one has been into the garden for ten years," Mary says carefully.







"I'll make them open the door again," he says.

"Oh, no! Don't do that!" Mary cries. "Please, please, let's keep it a secret. If you make them open the door, it'll never be a secret again. Perhaps we'll find the door one day. Then we can go inside and no one will know except you and me."

"I'd like that," Colin says. "I've never had a secret before. Secrets are nice."

"Yes, they are," Mary says. "Now you



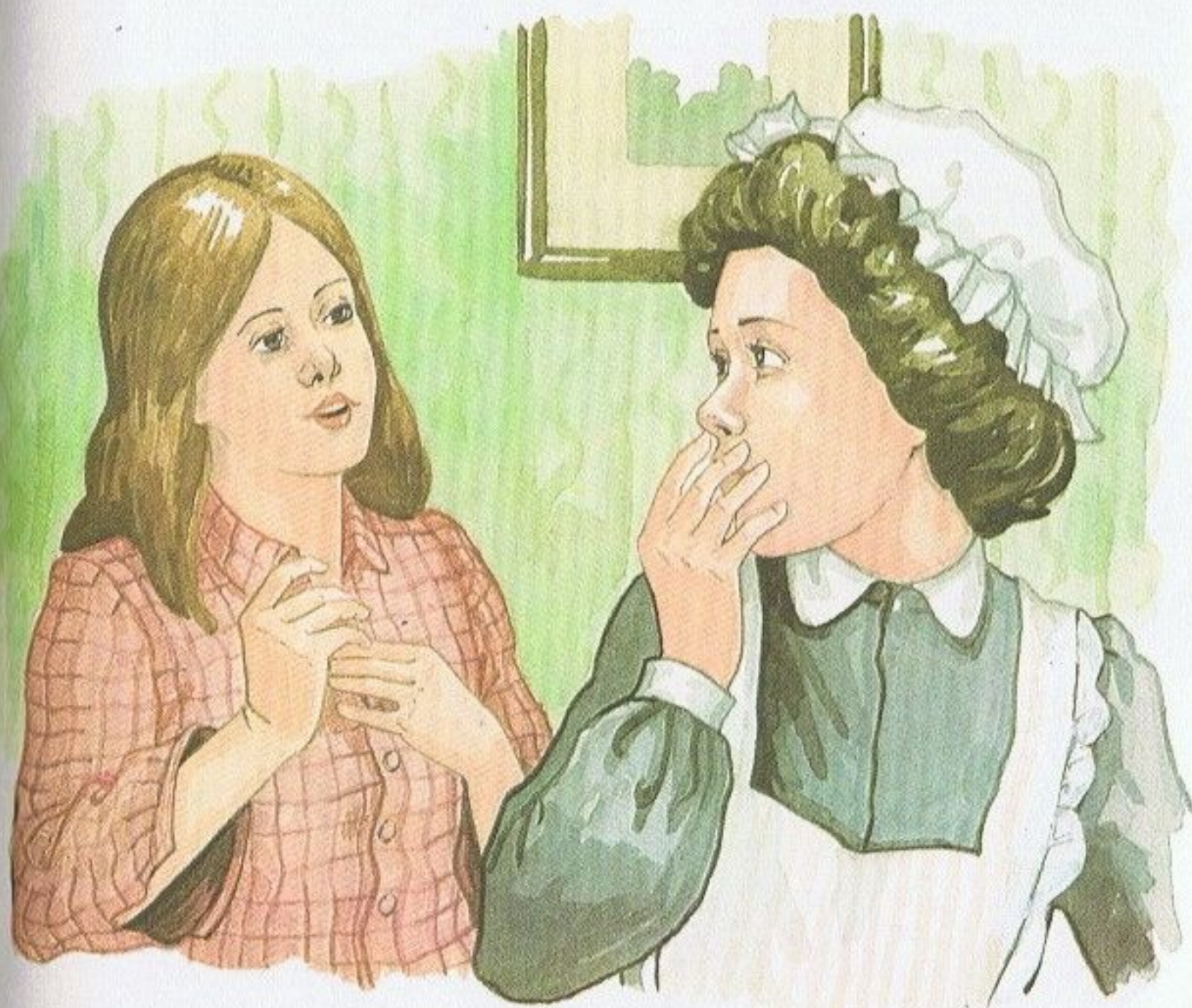
must go to sleep, Colin. And I must go to my room."

The next morning Mary says to Martha, "I know about Colin. I heard him in the night. I found him."

Martha is very worried. "Oh, no!" she cries. "Now I'll lose my job!"

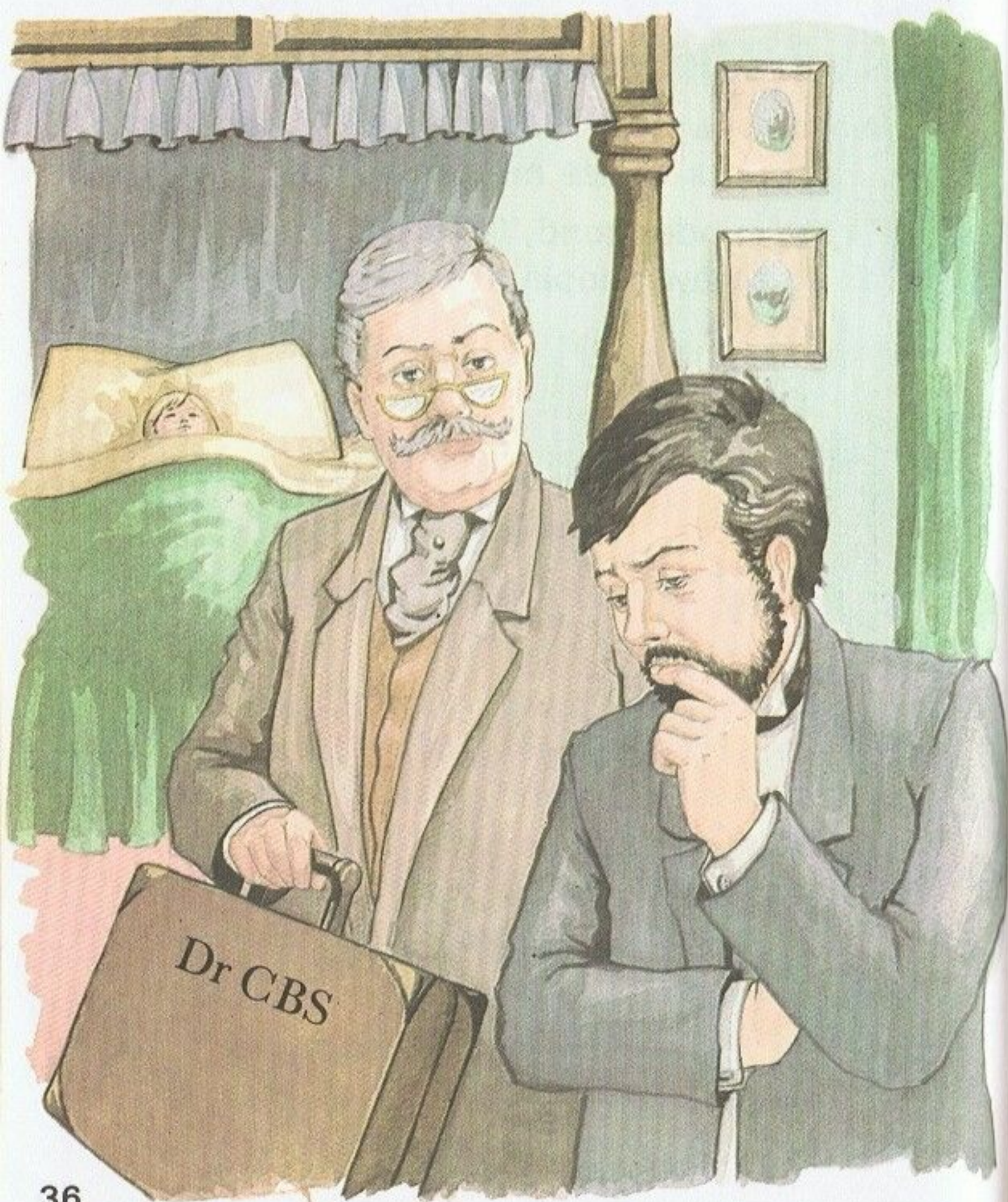
"No, you won't," Mary says. "Colin likes me. He wants to see me every day."

"I don't understand," Martha says. "He never likes new people. It's magic."





“What’s wrong with Colin?” Mary asks Martha. “Is he really going to die?”





"No one knows," Martha says. "He has never walked since he was a baby. He stays in bed all the time. His father thinks his back is weak. An important doctor from London came to see Colin once. He said, 'Colin isn't really ill. He just needs fresh air and sunshine.' But when they took Colin outside into the gardens, he became very ill. He has never been outside since that day. He thinks he's going to be a hunchback."

"I got better in the gardens, didn't I, Martha?" Mary says. "Perhaps Colin will get better in the fresh air and the sunshine, too. I'll talk to him about it."

That afternoon Martha says to Mary, "Colin wants to see you. It's magic. He's out of bed. He's sitting in a chair!"

Mary and Colin talk for a long time. She tells him about Dickon and his animals. "He knows all the animals on the moor," she says. "He understands them and he can talk to them. They aren't frightened of him. Sometimes he plays his pipe to them."



"I'd like to see the moor," Colin says sadly. "But I'll never go outside again. I'm going to die."

"How do you know?" Mary asks. This talk about dying makes her sad. "I don't think you're going to die," she says. "That doctor from London was right. You need fresh air."

It rains every day for a week. Mary cannot go outside so she goes to see Colin each day. They talk and read and play games. And for the first time in his life Colin laughs!

Mary wants to tell Colin about the secret garden, but she is afraid. "Perhaps if I tell him, he'll tell Mrs Medlock and his father. Then it won't be a secret."

At the end of that wet week, Mary wakes up early in the morning and the sun is shining again. She jumps out of bed and runs to the secret garden. Dickon is there already.

Mary looks round the garden. There are spring flowers everywhere. "Oh, Dickon!" she cries. "It's beautiful! But where's the robin?"

"He's busy," Dickon says. "He's building a nest for his wife's eggs."

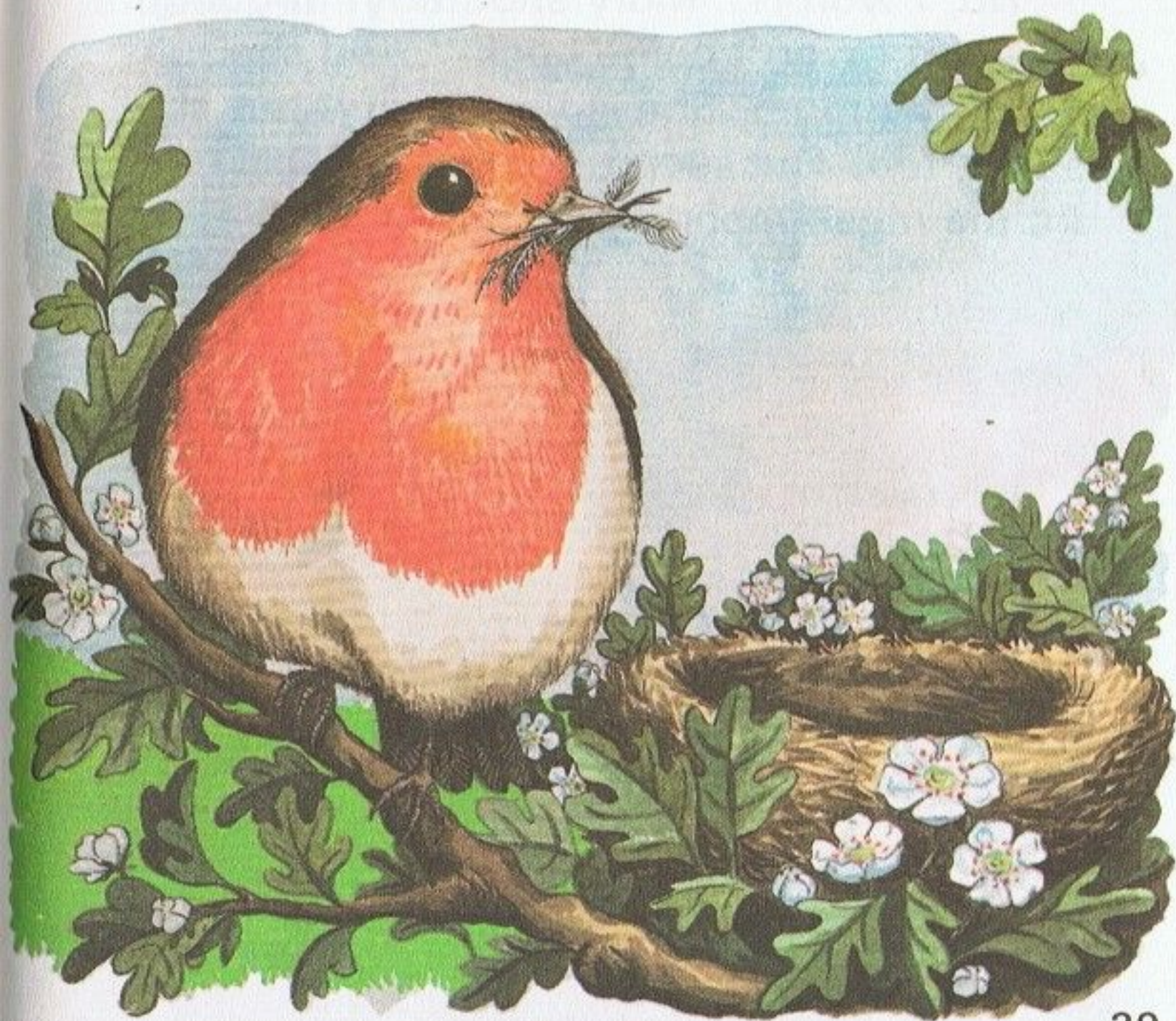


"Dickon, do you know about Colin Craven?" Mary asks.

"Yes, I do, but I've never seen him," Dickon replies.

"He's very sad," Mary says. "He thinks he's going to die. If we can bring him out here, he'll get better. I know it. But do you think that he can keep our secret?"

"Yes, I do," Dickon says. "Tell him about it this evening."





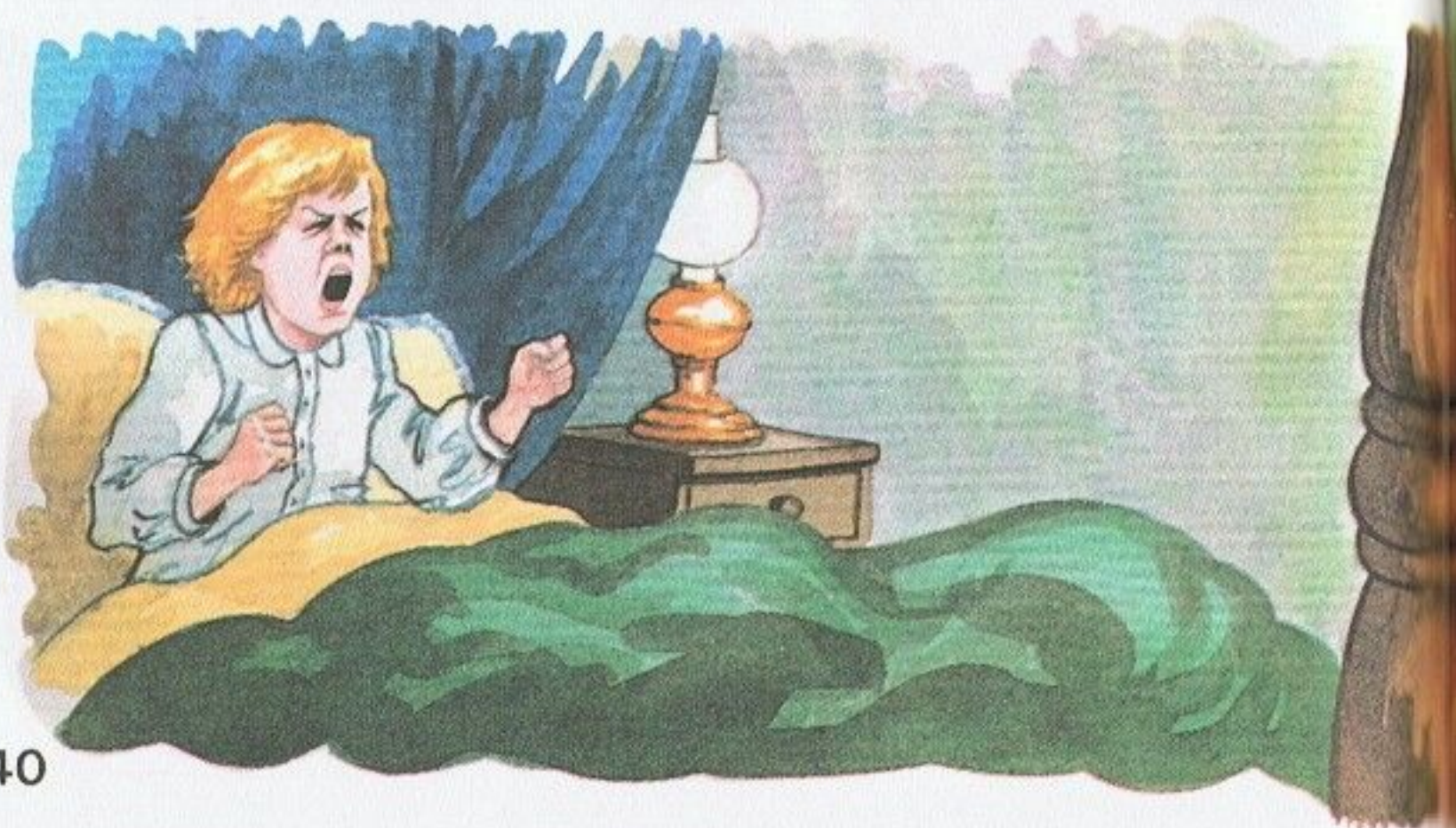
But when Mary goes back to the house Martha says, "You must go to Colin's room at once."

Colin is very angry. "I won't let Dickon come to Misselthwaite Manor again!" he shouts.

But Mary is cross, too. "If you send Dickon away," she cries, "I'll never come into this room again!"

"But I'm going to die," Colin cries. "You must come!"

"No, I won't!" Mary shouts. "I'm going now and I won't come back." And she runs out of the room. She is very angry, but she is sad, too. The secret garden and Dickon are the most important things in her life, but





she also likes Colin. "If he wants to see me tomorrow, I'll go," she says to herself.

In the night Mary wakes up suddenly. There is a lot of noise in the house. People are running and someone is crying.

"Oh, no, it's Colin," Mary says. "I must stop him! He'll be ill again if he cries so much!"

She runs to his room.

"Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!" she shouts. "If you cry again, I'll cry, too. And I can cry louder than you!"

"I can't stop!" Colin cries. "There's something on my back. I'm becoming a hunchback. I know it!"





"No, you aren't," Mary cries. "Let me look at your back." She looks carefully. Colin's back is very thin and weak, but he is not a hunchback. "There's nothing wrong with your back," she says. "And you're not going to die. If you come outside with me into the fresh air and the sunshine, you'll get better. Will you come?"

"Yes, Mary, I will," Colin answers quietly.

"Now you must go to sleep," Mary says.

She holds Colin's hand and soon he is asleep.

The next morning Mary finds Dickon in the garden with his squirrels. She tells him about Colin.

"We must bring him out here very soon," she says.

"Yes, we must," Dickon says.

In the afternoon Mary goes back to the house. She tells Colin about Dickon and the squirrels. Then she says, "Dickon can come to see you tomorrow. Is that all right?"

"Oh, yes, please," Colin replies. "That's wonderful news!"



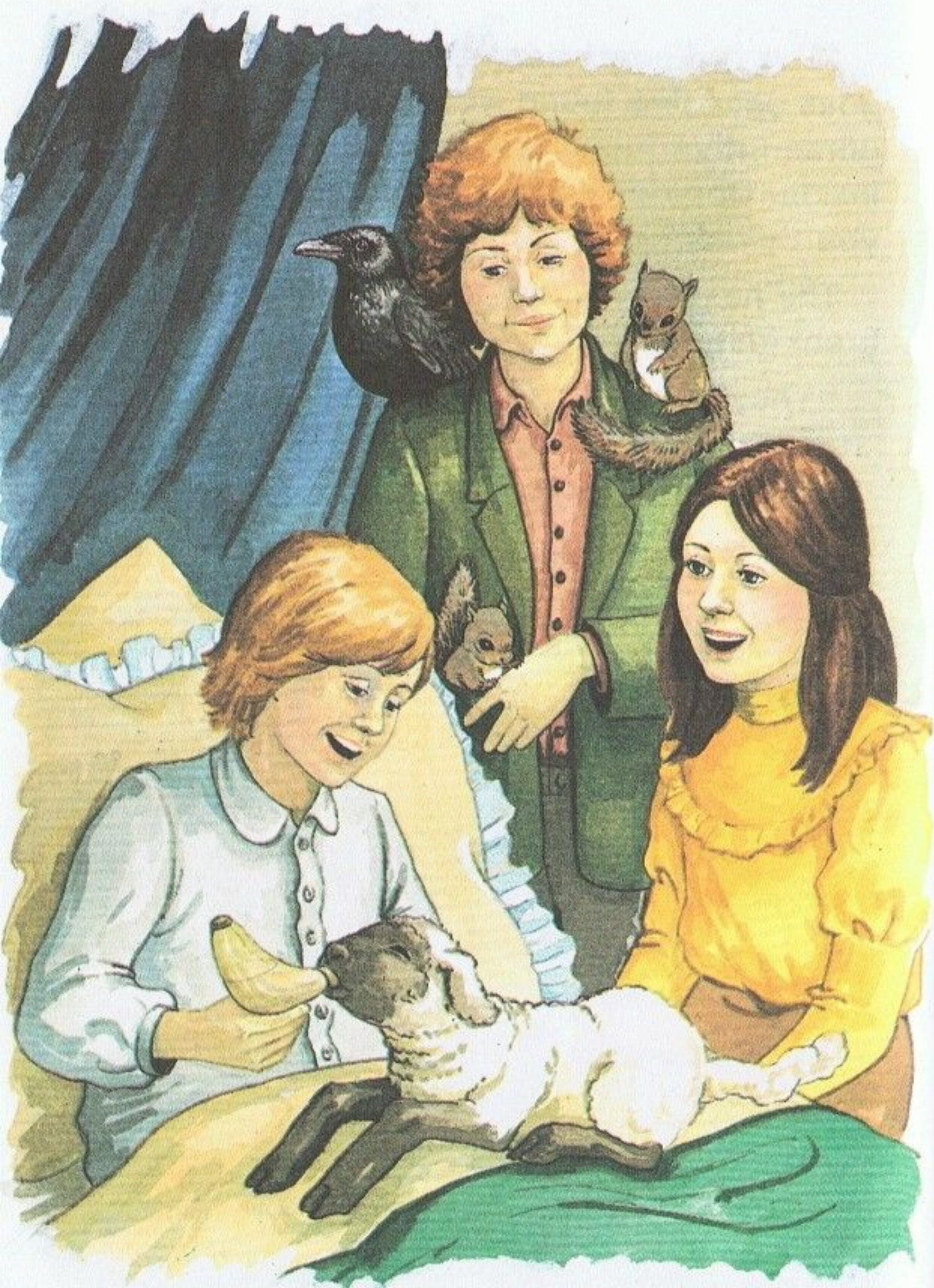
"I've got some better news, too," Mary goes on. "I've found the door to the secret garden. I've found the key and I've been inside. One day soon Dickon and I will take you there."

The next day Mary goes to see Colin after breakfast. Soon they hear footsteps.

"They're here!" Colin shouts.









Dickon is smiling when he comes in. He is carrying a little lamb. A blackbird is sitting on his right shoulder. A squirrel is sitting on his left shoulder and another squirrel is in his pocket.

"Do you want to feed the lamb, Colin?" Dickon asks.

"Yes, please," Colin answers.

Dickon gives Colin the lamb and a bottle of milk. Then the three children start to talk. Colin has a lot of questions for Dickon. At last he asks, "Can I go and see the secret garden now?"

"Yes, you can," Dickon says. "Dress now and then we'll take you outside in your wheelchair."

Soon the three children are outside. Colin looks up at the sky and smiles. Mary tells him about each place. "I met Ben Weatherstaff here. I first saw the robin here. I found the key here." Then, very quietly, she says, "This is the secret garden."

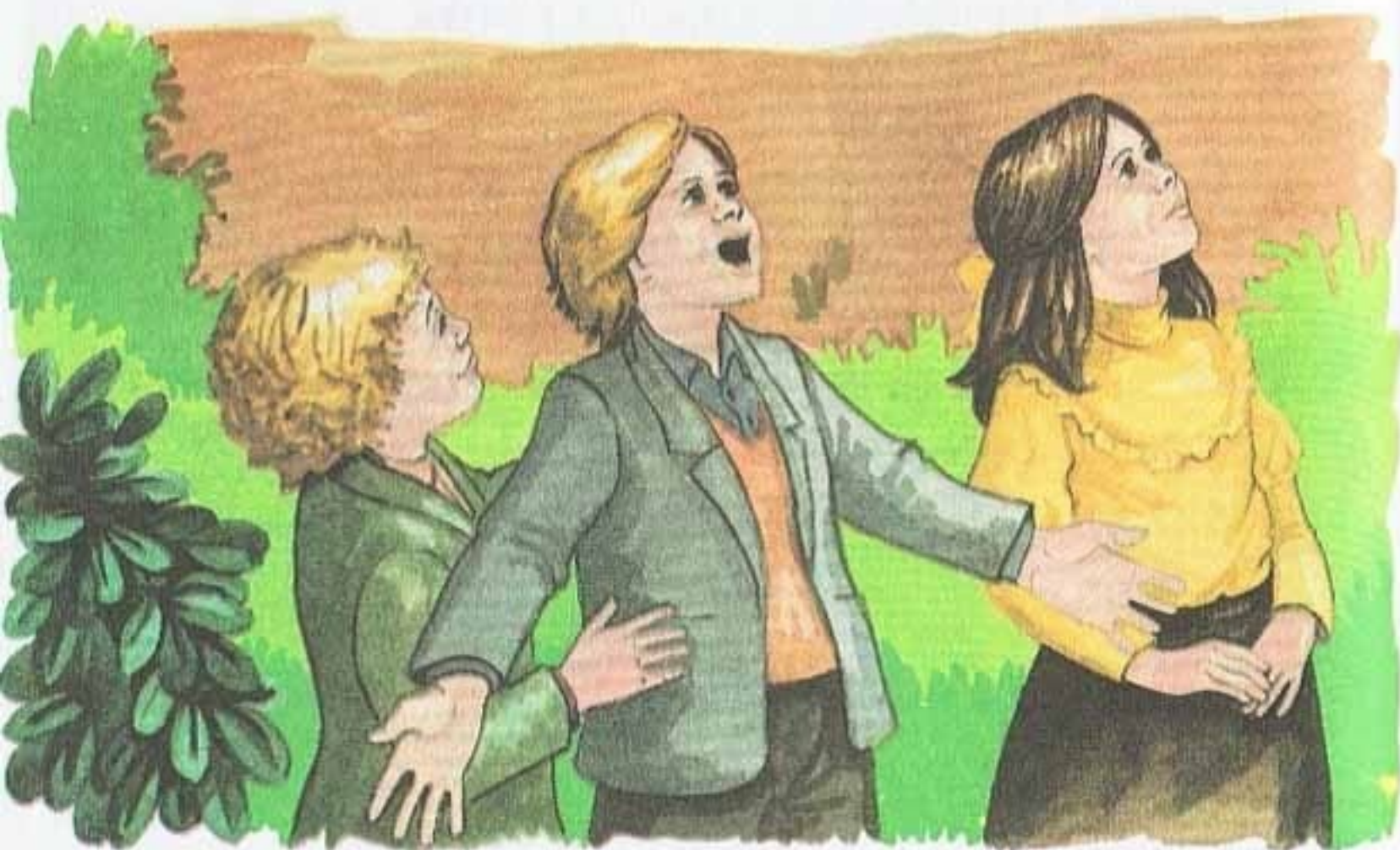


She opens the door and Dickon pushes the wheelchair inside quickly. Colin looks at everything. His eyes get bigger and bigger. The garden changes Colin's world that afternoon.

"It's beautiful!" he cries. "Mary, Dickon, I'll get well. I'll get well. I know it now!"

Dickon and Mary begin to work and Colin watches them. The robin flies down to see Colin.

In the evening Colin says, "Thank you, Mary. Thank you, Dickon. This has been a wonderful day. I don't want it to end." Suddenly he stops. "Who's that man?" he asks.







They look up and see Ben Weatherstaff's face over the top of the wall.

"What are you doing here, Mary Lennox?" Ben asks angrily. "And you, Dickon Sowerby? And who are you?" he asks Colin.

"Don't you know me?" Colin asks.

"Er — yes — I — do," Ben answers slowly. "You're the poor boy who can't walk."

"I can walk!" Colin shouts angrily. "I'll show you! Help me, Dickon."

Slowly he gets out of his wheelchair and stands up. He takes a step and then another and another.



“Thank God!” Ben Weatherstaff cries.  
“You aren’t a hunchback.”

“It’s the magic of the garden!” Colin cries. “It’s making the plants and flowers grow, and it’ll help me, too.”

“But this is our secret, Ben,” Mary says. “We don’t want to tell Mrs Medlock and the servants. We want to wait till Mr Craven comes home. We want him to know first. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Mary,” Ben says. “I’ll keep your secret. I won’t tell anyone.”

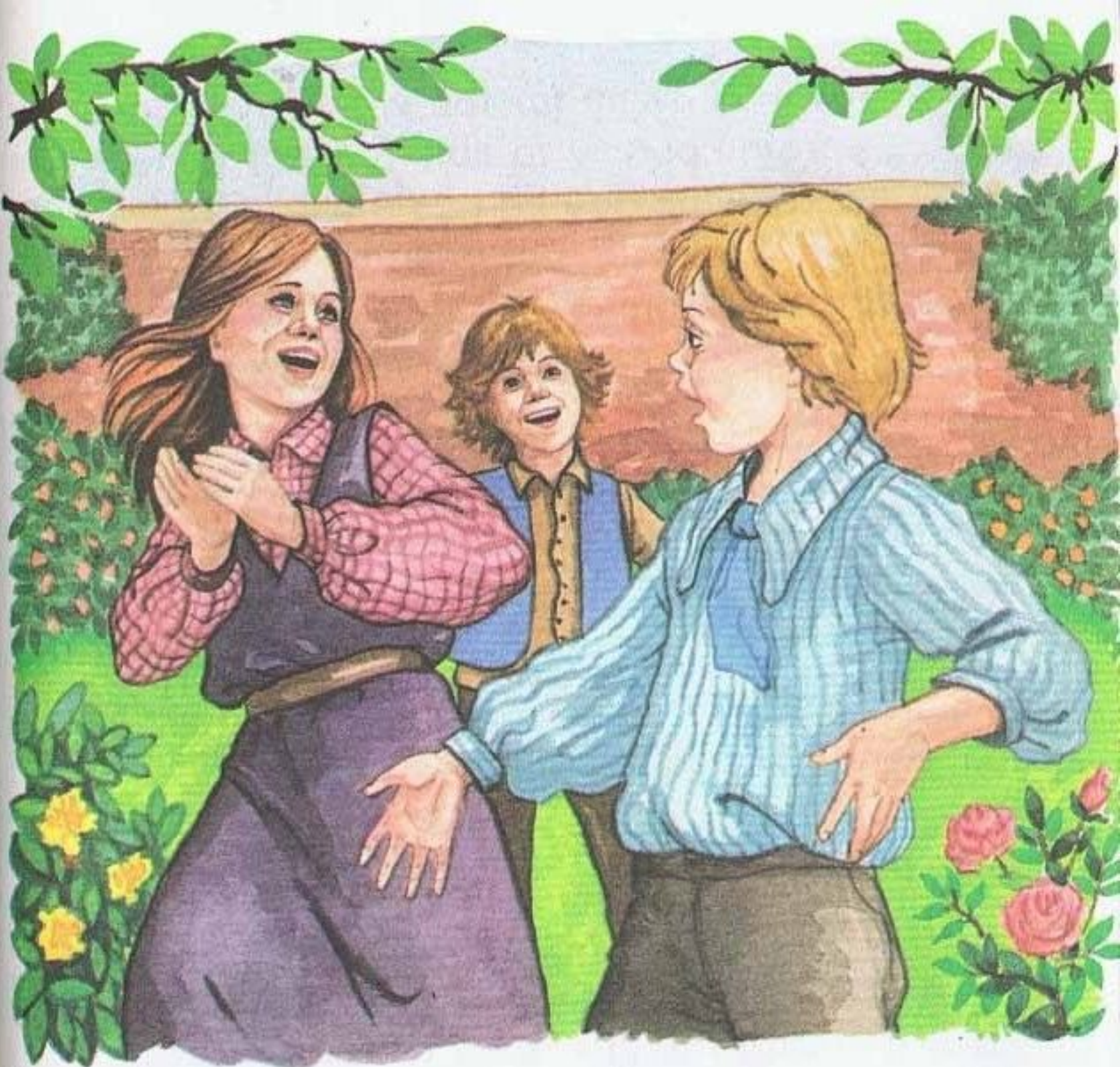
The next day Colin takes ten steps. And the next day he takes twenty. Soon he can walk round the whole garden.

“I must grow stronger every day,” Colin says. “Then, when my father comes home, I’ll walk into his room. And I’ll say, ‘Here I am, Father!’”

“He’ll be very happy,” Mary says.

It is very difficult to keep the secret. Every day Colin goes to and from the garden in his wheelchair. But every day he grows





stronger. He does not look ill now. And he is always hungry!

One day the three children are all working in the garden. Colin stops digging. "Look at me!" he shouts. "I'm well! I'm really well! At last!"



Mr Craven is away for the whole summer. He goes from country to country, but he is never happy. One day he has a beautiful dream about his wife's garden at Misselthwaite Manor.

"I must go home at once!" he says, when he wakes up.

A few days later he is back in Yorkshire. He goes to the garden at once. "But where's the key?" he asks himself. "Where did I bury it?"

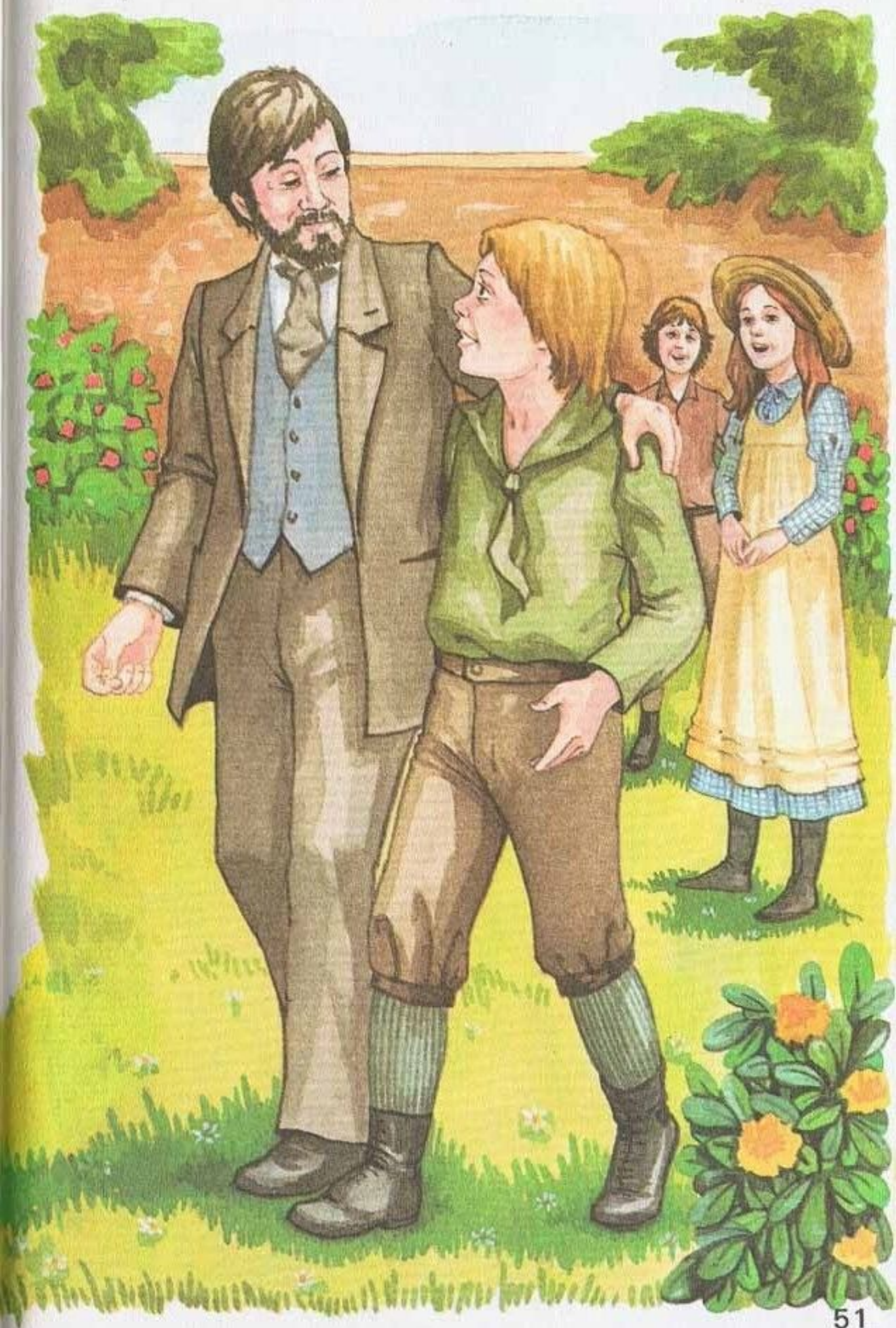
Suddenly the garden door opens and a tall, good-looking boy runs out.

"Colin!" Mr Craven shouts. "Is it really you?"

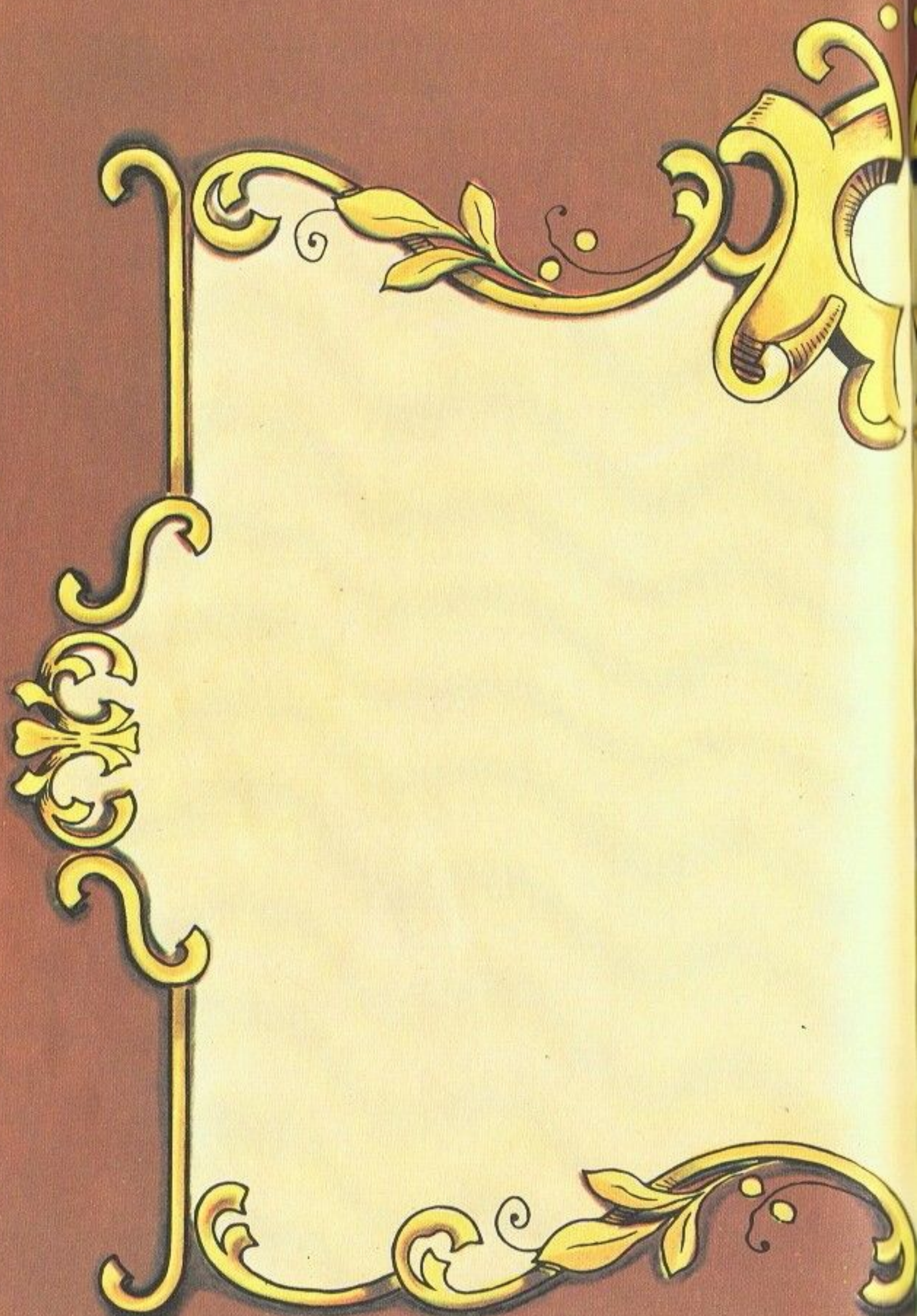
"Yes, Father," Colin answers. "It's me. I'm better. Come with me." And he takes his father into the garden. "This is Mary, Father, and this is Dickon," he says. "The magic of the garden has made me better. We kept it a secret. We wanted you to know first."

















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